



29th Signal Battalion

Family Newsletter • Issue 2 • March 2004

Message from Iraq

Greetings family members and fellow soldiers from the Great North West, or Middle East. The sun is out, it is 70 degrees, and I keep thinking we are in the North West. ☺

We have also had our fair share of rain, once again causing us to think we are still in the North West, and on top of that during the convoy up here we ran into traffic- of all things- causing 6 hour delays...and we thought we were getting away from I-5 traffic.

Ok, now that we got that out of the way, all is well here in Iraq.

First the convoy went off without any problems, Soldiers were motivated, disciplined and vigilant... nobody was going to mess with us!

We are really making a home for ourselves out here.

Most everyone has trailers they live in, the one on the inside is mine (obviously with all the flags). The office with the Eagles and Flags is my area too, but is in the S-1 shop. Then you see SFC Hoosier in the MWR room watching television. Then you see CPT Jones at his desk in his room.... all of the staff have their own room that is in the Headquarters (not trailers) and they have desks and some even have leather chairs, TV and satellite.

The command is making sure every office and living area has the basics: Air Conditioner, Microwave, TV and Refrigerator. By the time the 130-degree heat hits we should be ready for it. CSM is working on getting us Tint for all windows. We are getting netting to deter insects everybody is doing all they can to provide the best for all of us.

One of the pictures showed you the Female Shower trailer, which has 10 showers in their and some sinks. We also have a Toilet Trailer with many normal toilets and sinks as well. The local nationals do a good job of keeping them clean!

The Transfer Of Authority on 17 February went very well, you see some of those pictures. The outgoing commander spoke for about 20 minutes, and then LTC Kestle spoke for about 30 seconds...the soldiers in the formation loved that!!!

CPT Jones and I are working on a large area to provide for maximum MWR, we are even looking at having a Monthly Athletics and Recreation Tournament (MART) that will include the following: Basketball, Horseshoes, Air Hockey, Pool, Darts, Chess, Spades, Dominos and more.

The evenings are kind of cool as the temperature drops we are out smoking Cigars, winding down, and making plans to improve our areas. All these soldiers have remarkable imaginations when it comes to making the Quality of Life better!!

Camp Anaconda has close to 18,000 soldiers and civilians here, so we have four dining facilities that each serves four meals a day. There is an MWR tent, Pizza tent or club, Recreation center, Internet Café, Gym, not to mention all the things we brought out here with us!!

In the pictures you also see the Delta company 1SG and their Headquarters building, he is doing remarkable things in getting that building together for their soldiers! The picture with all the leather seats are going to be his day room...imagine that, sitting in leather watching TV, Delta is really taking care of their soldiers!

If any of you ever have questions, please feel free to email me at Tommy.Carson@us.army.mil

I will put together these newsletters monthly and try to send pictures as often as I can. Everybody is taking pictures; hopefully they are sending them back. But if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. I sure do miss those FRG

SFC Tommy Carson

meetings we used to have, planning fun events. I hope and pray that you are still doing things like this???!!! Our soldiers are creating ways to have fun and make life good out here and doing a remarkable job of it thanks to the chain of command and AAFES and most of all YOU. **I CANNOT BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH RECEIVING A PACKAGE MEANS TO YOUR LOVED ONES. KEEP SENDING THEM! THEY RAISE MORALE MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER IMAGINE!! THANKS!**

THANKS for your Prayers, your support, your letters, your packages and everything else. Do some fun things as an FRG, go bowling, see a movie, and enjoy yourselves, that way we don't worry too much about you. Hooah? I hope to hear from you!

Until next month...take care, and know how much we love you, appreciate you, and know that you are a critical and vital part of this mission out here!

In closing, the BN has adopted an Iraqi Military School for grades K-6. If you want to send school supplies, games, coloring stuff, etc...just send them to:

Tommy Carson
ATTN: School



Try a 'New Food' Night

Take a family outing to the grocery store. Have everyone choose one item that they have never tried before. Return home for a pot-luck of surprises as you and your family share your treats. Make a special package for your deployed soldier with some treats he will enjoy too and a letters telling him about the adventurous evening.

This is a busy and trying time for all of us. Many of you have seen your loved ones climb on buses and planes as they head overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Tears flow and a sense of loss sets in as we realize that we will lose days, weeks, and months of closeness, movies watched together, anniversaries, birthdays, the coming of spring, etc. Depression can begin to set in, and the children begin to "act up." There are days of strength and relative calm, and there are days when the whole world seems to be falling apart as one thing after another goes wrong. In all this, we look at the calendar hoping it will show us that the days are passing quickly. However, at this point, we receive no consolation because only a few days have passed.

Does any of this sound familiar? If it does, you need to know one thing: it is NORMAL. The fact that your kids seem to be out of control or overly clingy is normal, and it may get a little worse before it gets better. The fact that you have low days and high days is normal. Feelings of guilt at things you said or did not say, wishing you had not taken opportunities for granted when your

spouse was here, anger directed at the Army, and a host of other conflicting emotions—all of this is normal.

Your spouse has been taken from you, sent on a dangerous mission, and they will be gone for a while. Because of this, you will experience some scary feelings and many uncomfortable moments. One teen-aged boy describe the deployment to another chaplain this way, "I feel like my dad as been ripped out of my life." Your children, no matter how young, have begun to process the absence of their father or mother. Their misbehavior or clingy disposition is their way of crying for help, for love, comfort, and a sense of the normal. They will test boundaries as they note a significant change in the family structure, even though this change is temporary. For you and for your children, this is a time of intense adjustment, and you will note uncharacteristic feelings and behaviors in your children and yourself.

My goal in this article is to help you to see that this is a normal result of deployment separation, and both you and your children are going to be okay; you are going to make it.

Deployment brings about a life condition that requires great strength, a lot of courage, a ton of hard work, and a bundle of changes. And things will never be the "same."

But things can be good again, and they will. Your attitude about and response to this situation can make the difference. Will this deployment be the worst thing that ever happened to you and your family, or will it be one of the positive influences in your life? You can, to a large extent, determine the answer to that question. A positive attitude can make all the difference. I am not saying you need to be "happy" all the time. Rather, your overall vision of this time can be positively disposed, or aimed in a positive direction. This can help you and your children work through the transition now and the transition that will result from reunion.

As your chaplain, I want to encourage you, fill you with hope, and admire you. Being an Army spouse is, hands down, one of the hardest things a person can do. It is a life of relentless sacrifice. Keep the faith, stay the course, and stay connected to others. Together, we can make it, and we can look forward to a better tomorrow. ✨

Relax

Kate Kestle

These can be stressful times and a deployment only adds to that stress. Unfortunately, we often take that stress out on our children or even ourselves in the form of depression. It is important to notice how we are doing in any moment, including how we are interacting with other people. The hardest time to make a phone call to an acquaintance or friend is when we don't feel we have something to give in return. But this is often the critical time to call and talk with someone. **Pick up the phone today** and console yourself in the knowledge that one day you will be there for someone else who may need to talk or laugh. Other stress busters:

- **Exercise!**...even a few minutes of walking everyday lifts our mental emotional state.
- **Compassion** – learn to say kind things to yourself. What would your guardian angel say to you in this moment? Our thoughts profoundly affect our attitude. It is very difficult to be loving and kind with someone else when we are habitually saying critical things to ourselves. Nurture yourself with the words you wish someone had said to you as a child.
- **Learn to laugh at yourself.** We all "screw up". We say or do things we wish we hadn't. I recently burned a pot of rice so badly I thought I would have to throw the pot away! Just laugh at yourself –this is life!
- **Stretch!** Every morning and night allow yourself hang down from the waist. Don't try to touch you toes. The object is to let gravity make space in your neck, shoulders, ribs and pelvic area. Breathe into all these places and say "hello" to each area.
- **My favorite:** Lay flat on the floor with your feet propped up on pillows piled on the couch. This lets and the blood and lymph fluid drain from your legs and gets everything moving in your head and torso. (opposite antigravity from the above stretch) this is a great way to clear congestion or simply get a second wind.
- **Alone time:** It is essential to have time away from your children. Make a Tuesday night reservation to the CDC for free childcare and go home and take an uninterrupted bath!

Be gentle with yourself and everyone benefits.

